

In addition, H.J. Res. 136 provides authority for the District of Columbia to continue full operations. The resolution contains an objectionable provision that would single out poor women by prohibiting the use of District funds for providing abortion services. I have opposed including this provision in the regular fiscal year 1996 District of Columbia appropriations bill. Nevertheless, H.J. Res. 136 allows the District government to continue to operate without disruption.

Although I welcome H.J. Res. 136, it is a poor substitute for what the Congress should do immediately—that is, send me an acceptable continuing resolution to reopen the departments and agencies that are at least partially shut down because they lack fiscal year 1996 appropriations. Along with the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Health and Human Services, they include the Departments of Education, Labor, Housing and Urban Development, Commerce, Justice, State, and the Interior; the Environmental Protection Agency; the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the Small Business Administration.

To be sure, H.J. Res. 136 prevents the serious impact that the partial shutdown could have had on 3.3 million veterans and their survivors as well as nearly 9 million low-income children. But the shutdown continues to hurt millions of innocent Americans—from the 20,000 parents and students each day who cannot apply for student aid, to the 2,500 moderate- and low-income working families each day who cannot get their Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgage loans processed.

The shutdown also has forced the affected departments and agencies to furlough a total of about 280,000 Federal employees, throwing their lives into disruption and raising their fears just as the holidays approach. Federal workers, who are already being asked to do their jobs more efficiently as we downsize the Government, deserve better.

The congressional majority apparently wants to use a partial Government shutdown to force me into accepting their extreme budget plan. It did not work last month, when the majority prompted an earlier shutdown by not sending me an acceptable continuing resolution. And it will not work now.

The Congress should send me an acceptable continuing resolution to reopen the Government, return to work the 280,000 Federal employees who were furloughed through no fault of their own, provide back pay for these workers, and give the American people the services they expect from their Government.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
December 22, 1995.

NOTE: H.J. Res. 136, approved December 22, was assigned Public Law No. 104-69. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on the Airline Tragedy Near Buga, Colombia

December 22, 1995

Hillary and I offer our profound condolences to the many families whose loved ones perished in the crash December 20 of American Airlines flight 965 near Buga, Colombia. Coming on the eve of the holiday season, this tragic event takes on even greater poignancy. I have dispatched an interagency team to the site which, working alongside Colombian authorities, will pursue the goals of searching for survivors, identifying victims, and determining the cause of the crash.

Our hopes and prayers, along with those of all Americans, are with those whose lives have been so affected by this tragedy.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

December 23, 1995

Good morning. As you know, I have spent the last week in intense discussion with congressional leaders over how to balance the budget in 7 years. It's important to balance the budget to lift the burden of debt from future generations.

In the last 3 years, we've cut our deficit in half, and we need to finish the job. But we have to balance the budget in a way that

reflects our most fundamental values: increasing opportunity; asking everyone to assume responsibility; strengthening our families and the economy; and recognizing the duty we owe to each other, to our parents, our children, and those who need and deserve our help. That's how we've reduced the deficit since I took office: cutting unnecessary programs; reducing the size of the Federal Government by 200,000; reducing red-tape but investing in education, the environment, research and technology; protecting Medicare and Medicaid; reducing taxes on the hardest pressed working families. It's worked. It's given us more jobs, more new businesses, low inflation, and record economic performance in the stock market and in many other places.

Now, that's how I want to finish the job of balancing the budget. But even as we continue talking, I hope Congress will agree to open the Government and open all the agencies that have closed so that we can end the financial and emotional turmoil for more than 280,000 furloughed Federal employees and 460,000 working but not-getting-paid Federal employees.

In the spirit of the holidays, we should do everything we can to put these people back to work and to resume critical services the American people need and deserve. Just last night, I signed legislation that Congress passed yesterday to allow 3.3 million veterans and 13 million needy children and their mothers to receive their benefits by January 1st. That's a good start. I hope we can resume all services as we work together to balance the budget.

Our talks are making progress. Yesterday we agreed to resume our negotiations next week with the goal of reaching an agreement as soon as possible. I am confident we can end this impasse and pass a 7-year balanced budget.

As we look back at this year, in this season of hope, I think we ought to take just a little time to reflect on the progress and accomplishment of America. It should give us real optimism that we can finish this budget job and go on to greater things in 1996.

Nineteen ninety-five was a year in which our country had the opportunity and the responsibility to play our role as the world's

premier peacemaker. Our efforts opened the door to peace in places where only rancor and war had previously existed. As a peacemaker, not a policeman, we have helped the peace process finally begin to take hold in the Middle East, while we joined the world in mourning the tragic assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. We have done what Prime Minister Rabin would have wanted us to do: We've kept moving forward. And finally, it looks like Israel and Syria will sit together in the United States to seek a way to resolve their differences and live together peacefully.

We're also helping to bring peace to Bosnia. The Dayton agreement and our decision to join in the international effort to secure the peace in Bosnia has given the people of the former Yugoslavia a chance to rebuild their lives. After 4 long years of horrible violence, America now has the opportunity to lead in the effort to bring lasting peace to that war-torn country and to stabilize Central Europe as well.

In Northern Ireland, I saw thousands and thousands of children beginning to celebrate their second Christmas season of peace. And in Haiti, they will soon celebrate the very first peaceful transfer of power from one democratically elected President to another in the history of the country. And American leadership helped to make both those celebrations possible.

The seeds of peace are also sinking deeper roots right here in America. We just learned that last year our murder rate dropped 12 percent, the largest decline in 35 years. Violent crime overall is down 5 percent. Now, we know our work is far from done on too many of our mean streets. Too many of our children still are raising themselves, not being taught right from wrong. There is still too much crime and violence, and it's still rising among teenagers in many parts of the country. But we are beginning to turn the tide. And we do know what works.

Much of the success is due to efforts in communities throughout our country to get guns off our streets and put more police on the streets and to give our young people something to say yes to as well as something to say no to. More importantly, it is due to the outpouring of grassroots community in-

vovement in all these efforts in the comprehensive fight against crime and violence.

People are getting the message that community policing works. And it's up to every citizen to rise up, reach out, and link arms with local police to keep their own neighborhoods safe and their schools safe. Now, the progress we've seen is cause for hope. We just have to keep working on it here at home.

From the Middle East to Northern Ireland, to our troops in Bosnia, to our toughest neighborhoods, America is leading the way to peace and reconciliation. All around the world billions of people look to America as a model of democracy and freedom. And we should see ourselves as others see us. We should finish the job of balancing the budget and reopening the Government in the spirit of cooperation and unity so that we can continue to grow and prosper together and be a force in the world for peace and freedom. That is the spirit of the season and the spirit of America.

Let each of us resolve to do what we can to be peacemakers. Let us bring peace to every child who deserves to be free from violence and full of hope. And as we celebrate the birth of a child whose only shelter was the straw of a manger, let us remember the words of the Prince of Peace who said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." We ask the blessings of this peace for everyone. That is our prayer this Christmas.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Christmas Eve Message to United States Troops in Bosnia-Herzegovina *December 24, 1995*

Merry Christmas, and best wishes to all of you on this Christmas Eve. I am honored to speak today to the men and women of Operation Joint Endeavor, in Bosnia, Croatia, Hungary, and Italy, on ships at sea and skies overhead, and those preparing to deploy. I know that all around the world Americans who wear our Nation's uniform are listening, and I want to wish all of them well, just as I know they wish you well as you embark on this historic mission.

With me today are the families of seven Americans serving in and around Bosnia: Lieutenant Colonel Bob Norman of the 621st Air Mobility Control Squadron in Tuzla; Command Master Chief Jim Sirles on the USS *America* in the Adriatic; Sergeant William LeBright of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit on board the USS *Whidbey Island*; Warrant Officer Willie Wade with the 586th Assault Bridge Company; Lieutenant Colonel O'Malley Smith of the 353d Civil Affairs Group; Sergeant Mark Ackerman with the 114th Public Affairs Detachment; and Linda Carsey, an Army civilian contract specialist on her way to Tuzla.

These families here remind us all of the Americans we're sending to Bosnia. They're leaving their families behind. And many of them are already far from their loved ones this Christmas Eve. I want to extend a special greeting to those families today. I know that when we call on our troops to protect America's interests and values, we also call on their families. Their families' special sacrifice may not make the headlines, but we could not be successful without it, for as our troops stand up on America's behalf, it is their families who stand behind them, who keep them strong with confidence, support, and love.

These thoughts are especially close in our minds this time of year. As Americans come together in this season of peace, we know that you, the men and women of Operation Joint Endeavor, are serving on a mission of peace, the noblest mission of all. The pride your families have in each of you is shared by all your fellow Americans all across our Nation.

Ten days ago in Paris, the Presidents of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia signed an agreement that turns their troubled region from war to peace. Our Nation has an important interest in seeing that peace take hold for the people of Bosnia who have suffered so much for so long; for the stability of Europe, which is so crucial to our own stability; and for the safer, stronger world we want to leave for our children.

There is too much at stake in Bosnia today for our Nation to sit on the sidelines, and that's why we've turned to you, our men and women in uniform. You provide us with the power to meet threats to our security. You